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Improving 4-H CLUBS

**4-H Studies
Point the Way
to Better Organization
and Functioning**



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Before You Start Reading.

This leaflet is intended to help you—a county extension agent or local 4-H Club leader. It should give you a better idea of how you can organize and conduct 4-H Club work more effectively in your county or community.

The findings published in this leaflet were assembled through the combined efforts of the State and assistant State club leaders in Northeastern States working through a committee composed of—

Albert Hoefer, State club leader, New York, chairman (now retired).

Allen Baker, State club leader, Pennsylvania.

R. P. Davison, State club leader, Vermont (now State extension director).

Mylo S. Downey, State club leader, Maryland (now associate leader, 4-H Club and YMW Programs, Federal Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture).

Florence Howard, assistant State club leader, West Virginia (now deceased).

Irma Winkleblack, until April 1949 assistant State club leader, Connecticut.

Rollyn P. Winters, State club leader, New Jersey.

E. W. Aiton, 4-H field agent, Northeastern States (now director, 4-H Club and YMW Programs, Federal Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture).

Mrs. Laurel K. Sabrosky, extension analyst, Federal Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

These people reviewed the 4-H Club studies listed in extension bibliographies and reviews. They selected studies containing reliable information and applying to 4-H work and distributed them to all State club leaders and assistants in the Northeastern States. These leaders studied and reviewed the reports at their regional meeting in November 1949.

As a result of this meeting the committee asked the author to assemble findings on effective organization and functioning of 4-H clubs.

Findings from more recent studies have been included in this revision.

Here are the findings.

Cooperative Extension Work: United States
Department of Agriculture and State Land-
Grant Colleges and Universities Cooperating.

IMPROVING 4-H CLUBS

Laurel K. Sabrosky, Extension Analyst

Two principles of social activity and group participation apply closely to 4-H Club work:

1. Any person takes part more wholeheartedly in any activity if it is his—if he helps to plan it. If he originates the idea, his participation is at its best.



2. Any person maintains his interest in an activity if he is taking part in it.



The professional extension worker and the local leader are a team; the extent to which each carries his share of the load determines the success of the 4-H program.

You'll want to provide the opportunity for every 4-H member to do something besides his project work. A general activity program serves a real purpose here.

Vitality of 4-H Clubs

A 4-H Club asked for by a community lives longer.

More 4-H Clubs disband during their first 3 years than later on. Give new clubs special attention.

A large new club lives longer than a small new one. Try to get 10 or more members at the start.

A 4-H Club lives longer if it takes in new members every year. Don't let membership drop. Keep club size at least the same or larger year by year.

A 4-H Club sponsored by a local organization is more active and longer lived.

4-H Clubs in which most of the members complete their project work are the ones that live longer.

Parent cooperation is invaluable in maintaining an active 4-H Club.

Reenrollment of 4-H Members

4-H members who fail to complete a project make up a large share of those who do not reenroll the next year.

Members in 4-H Clubs that fail to reorganize make up another large share of those who do not reenroll the next year.

Enroll new 4-H members as soon as they are eligible. The younger the new members, the longer they will keep their interest in 4-H and stay with it.

Members are more active and stay in club work longer if the club is sponsored by an active community group.

When parents take part in 4-H activities, members are more likely to reenroll.

When close friends of the 4-H member also belong to the club, members are more likely to reenroll.

Well-trained leaders contribute to a satisfying 4-H Club experience for the members and to higher reenrollment.

Local recognition provided for 4-H Club members leads toward more successful 4-H Club work. Do not limit publicity only to prize winners.

Lack of transportation is often a hindrance for members. You can solve this problem by arranging for convenient meeting places or planning of car pools.

4-H Club Meetings

A good-sized club, about 20 members, provides the best opportunity for an interesting meeting.

Meet in member's homes.

Hold meetings in the evenings, when members are 14 years of age and older.

Use most of the meeting time for work connected with projects, but make the business and recreation parts important too. See that every member has a chance to participate in something, if only singing or games.

Have a variety of activities, both in club meetings and apart from club meetings.

Club officers and committees should function actively. Start giving responsibility to members in their first club year.

Provide opportunities for members and leaders to help plan the program and activities.

During business meetings members should have the chance to discuss and make decisions about local events, activities, participation in outside events, and their own problems of membership, reenrollment, and project completions.

Year-round meetings are most satisfactory, even if they are held less often or are merely special ones, during certain seasons.



Meetings held in members' homes are the most effective.



A project should be in a subject-matter field in which the member is interested.

Encourage completion of projects. Failure to complete a project sets a child back in his development. He loses some self-confidence.

4-H club members need help with project work. This should be provided by the club leader, parents, or extension agents.

If the project offers possibility of money-making, help everyone to share in the earnings, not just the top award winners. Give local leaders special training in the reasons for record books and their values, and in how to help members keep them up to date.

Local Activities

Hold social events for members and for parents.

Hold exhibitions, demonstrations, and other 4-H affairs for the public.

See that every member has a part to play in them.

County or District-Within-County Activities

Each club should participate in several activities during the year.

Arrange for the attendance, and perhaps actual participation, at some events by all members, nonwinners as well as winners; noncompleters as well as completers.

Be sure that local leaders, council members, and club representatives help to plan and carry out the affair.

Plan so that some phases of each event will involve participation of every person present: Singing, group discussion, games, and other group activities.

As soon after the event as possible, the planning group should evaluate it, and suggest improvements for next year.

Each event should have something in it that is different from the last year's event.

Studies From Which These Findings Were Taken:

ARVIDSON, D.

REPORT OF A STUDY OF COUNTY-WIDE 4-H CLUB EVENTS. 36 pp. LaFayette, Ind., Purdue Agr. Ext. 1948. (Processed.)

Digest of thesis (M.A.), George Washington University, Washington, D. C.

COPP, J. H., AND CLARK, R. C.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH REENROLLMENT IN 4-H CLUBS. 40 pp. Madison, Wis., Agr. Expt. Sta., Res. B. 195., 1956

FRUTCHEY, F. P., AND OTHERS.

EDUCATIONAL GROWTH (in specified 4-H projects). U. S. Dept. Agr. Ext. Serv. Cir.: 391, 1942; 384, 1942; 382, 1942; 378, 1942; 369, 1941; 356, 1941; and 353, 1941. Washington, D. C. (Processed.)

JONES, H. M., AND OTHERS.

4-H CLUB WORK AND HIGH-SCHOOL YOUTH. 36 pp. Amherst, Mass., State Col. Ext. 1947. (Processed.)

A New England cooperative extension publication.

JOY, B., AND OTHERS

VOLUNTEER LEADERS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE 4-H PROGRAM. (1938) 29 pp. U. S. Dept. Agr. Ext. Serv. Cir. 347. Washington, D. C. 1941. (Processed.)

LOVEJOY, K. C., AND OTHERS.

A STUDY OF HOW TO GET PARENT COOPERATION IN 4-H CLUB WORK: MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND OHIO, 1947. 31 pp. U. S. Dept of Agr. Ext. Serv. Cir. 450. Washington, D. C. 1948. (Processed.)

SABROSKY, L. K.

BOOSTING 4-H ENROLLMENT. 7 pp. U. S. Dept. of Agr. PA 338. Washington, D. C. 1957.

MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR 4-H CLUB MEMBERS. 11 pp. U. S. Dept. of Agr., Federal Extension Serv. PA 203, revised. Washington, D. C. 1957.

STATE CLUB LEADERS IN IOWA, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND SOUTH DAKOTA.

TURNER, R. A., AND JOY, B.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS FROM STUDY OF LOCAL 4-H CLUB PROGRAMS IN IOWA, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND SOUTH DAKOTA. 34 pp. Washington, D. C., U. S. Dept Agr. Ext. Serv. 1941. (Stencil No. 1012-41.)

THAYER, P. W.

SOME FACTORS AFFECTING THE VITALITY OF LOCAL 4-H CLUBS. 72 pp. Washington, D. C. 1940. (Typewritten.) (Includes bibliog.)

YOUNGSTROM, C. O., SABROSKY, L. K., AND THE WESTERN STATES 4-H CLUB STUDY COMMITTEE.

A STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING REENROLLMENT OF FIRST-YEAR 4-H CLUB MEMBERS—PHASE I. 11 Western States. (Unpublished.)

Vitalize Your 4-H Club by. . .

1. Enrolling members as soon as they are eligible.
2. Enrolling members' close friends.
3. Helping members with their projects.
4. Encouraging members to take part in many activities.
5. Having a variety of activities at the club meeting.
6. Training local leaders.
7. Getting parents and community cooperation.